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BUDDHIST MONUMENTS

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INTRODUCTORY

This brochure is the Ninenth in the series 'See Bihar'. It is by no means an exhaustive account of the Buddhist monuments and shrines in Bihar, although the accounts contained in these pages may give the readers some idea of the rich archaeological remains that are scattered throughout the State. It is hoped that this brochure will prove not only informative and useful, but will also inspire students of history to make a detailed and authoritative study of this fascinating subject.

For the explanation of the technical terms 'Stupas, Viharas and Chaityas', the readers are referred to the appendix at the end of the book.

— R. B. LAL



MAP OF
BIHAR
SHOWING PLACES OF BUDDHIST
MONUMENTS





The four places, held in the highest veneration, by the Buddhists all over the world are Lumbini, the birth-place of Gautam Buddha ; Bodhi Gaya, where he attained *Samma Sombodhi* (Supreme Enlightenment) ; *Isipattana* (the Deer Park at Saranath) where he "*set in motion the Wheel of the Law*" ; and Kusinagar, where he passed away into *Mahaparinirvana*. It is believed that Buddha himself told Ananda, his constant companion, that "there are these four places, Ananda, which the believing clansman should visit with feelings of reverence".

According to the Pali texts, Lumbini was situated midway between Kapilavastu, at the foot of the Himalayas—the capital of Suddodhana, a Sakya clan prince and father of Gautam Buddha—and Devadaha, the capital of Anjana Sakya, the father of Maya Devi. Maya Devi, the wife of King Suddodhana had no issue for a long time. This was a source of great anxiety to the king as well as to his loyal subjects. To the great joy of everyone in the kingdom, however, she at last conceived a child, who was destined to become the Buddha. After leading a life of absolute purity for ten months, Maya Devi decided to go to her parent's home for her confinement. She started with an imposing procession. When the procession reached the renowned Lumbini Garden, Maya Devi was charmed with the festive garb of the *sal*, *ashoka* and *champa* trees and the flowers blossoming everywhere. Sporting about the park for a while and seeing a magnificent *sal* tree at a certain spot, she raised her right hand to catch a branch for support. At that

very moment, pangs of child-birth arose and the Boddhi-sattva was born (566 B. C.). The prince was named Siddhartha, as he was the fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations of the king and his subjects. The mother died when the infant was only seven days old, and he was brought up by his aunt, Mahaprajapati Gotami, with the desired care and affection. From his very childhood he had a meditative bent of mind and he felt great anguish at the affliction of the world : the sight of lame, diseased, distressed and old persons would greatly move him. His father got him married to a princess, Yasodhara by name, to induce him to wordly life, but when a child, Rahula, was born, he thought he was getting tied up and renounced his home and kingdom at the young age of 29.

After renouncing his home, Gautama became the disciple of a number of famous teachers like Alara Kalama, went through their courses of spiritual discipline, but got no satisfaction. He eventually subjected himself to the extremes of *Tapasya*, and undertook a long long fast. He was about to collapse, when he realised that fasting could not secure salvation. He returned to normal life and began to take some food, when he was deserted by his fellow disciples as a fallen *bhikshu* ! He repaired to the quiet jungle of Uruvilva, resolved to solve the mystery of life in his own way !

He then moved towards the village of Senani, where he took *madhupayasa*, a milk-preparation, from the hands of Sujata, the daughter of the village chief, under the *Ajapala* banyan tree, and proceeding further, he met Sotthiya, a grass-cutter, who offered him some bundles of grass with which he crossed the Lilajana, arrived at the

Bodhi (Pipal) Tree, scattered the grass on the ground and sat down in deep meditation facing the east.

As Buddha sat in meditation, a titanic struggle between the Good and the Evil ensued within himself. *Mara*, the spirit of sensuous desires, tempted him with the pleasures of the flesh followed by other evil temptations, all of which he conquered, and, finally, as the day broke on the full-moon day of the month of *Baisakha*, and the first rays of the sun bathed the horizon in a blaze of light, the light of knowledge burst upon his mind and he became *Samma Sambuddha*. Fully Enlightened. Thereafter, he came to be known as *Buddha* or the awakened one, *Tathagata* (he who has attained the Truth) and *Sakya-muni* or the sage of the Sakya clan. Because he belonged

The Mahabodhi tree



to the Gautama Gotra, he was also known as Gautama Buddha as distinguished from six other Buddhas who are said to have preceded him. It is said that, in the first watch of the night, he gained knowledge of his previous births; in the second, of the present state of being; in the third, of the chain of causes and effects; and at the dawn of day, he attained that spiritual illumination which made him Buddha, the Enlightened. Thereafter, for seven weeks, he kept on meditating on the bliss he had attained, spending one week at seven different places round the *Bodhidruma*, the Bodhi Tree. On the 49th day of his meditation, he met two merchants of Orissa (Tapussa and Bhalluka), his first converts. He then went to Saranath (Isipattan), near Banaras, where he preached his first sermon in the Deer Park before the five monks, his one-time associates during the early period of his quest after Truth, exhorting the middle path that leads to *Nirvana*. The middle course consists of the noble eight-fold paths (*ashtangika marga*)—(1) Right Vision; (2) Right Aspiration; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Conduct; (5) Right Livelihood; (6) Right Exertion; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Contemplation. He also gave an exposition of the Supreme Knowledge, the knowledge of the series of causes and effects, the four Noble Truths (*arya satyani*), namely, suffering, the causes of suffering, the suppression of suffering, and the path that leads to this suppression. With this preaching he inaugurated the Rule of Law and set the Wheel of Law in motion.

After sending out his 60 disciples to preach to the people, he returned to Uruvela. Here he converted three hermits (Uruvilva Kasyap, Nadi Kasyap and Gaya

Kasyap) together with their 1,000 disciples. Accompanied by them, he went to the Gayasirsa Hill (Brahmayasu-Vishnupad) and, after a short stay there, he wended his way to the court of King Bimbisara, at Rajagriha, never to return to the scene of the great consummation. After 45 years of strenuous activity for the welfare of mankind, he attained *Mahaparinirvana* at Kusinagar, at the age of 80.

Buddha was a contemporary of great religious teachers, Mahavira in India, Confucius and Lao-tse in China, and Zoroaster in Iran. The Dhammavijaya of Asoka, after his Kalingavijaya, endowed the followers of the faith with a proselytizing zeal, and although the religion of Sakyamuni is almost extinct in the land of its birth, it is professed by one-third of the world's population.

II. LOCATIONS

Lumbini, in Nepal territory, is approachable by two routes: first through Nawgarh, a station on the North-Eastern Railway, at a distance of about 20 miles from it, the road being fairly serviceable. The second route is via Nautanwa, the terminus of the Nautanwa branch of the North-Eastern Railway, from where Lumbini is about 10 miles. The road is being improved. Buddha Gaya is 7 miles from Gaya Railway Station, on the Eastern Railway, Gaya being the headquarters of a district of that name, 57 miles south of Patna. Sarnath is situated 7 miles north of the sacred city of Banaras which is 130 miles west of Gaya. All kinds of conveyances are always available and ply between Gaya and Bodh Gaya and also

between Banaras and Saranath which is also a Railway Station on the North-Eastern Railway, next to Banaras City Station. Kusinagar is situated about a mile and a half to the north of Kasia, in Gorakhpur district of the Uttar Pradesh. It is now known as "Matha Kunwar" (meaning dead Prince). It can be reached either from Gorakhpur City or from Tashil Deoria, both stations on the North-Eastern Railway. In fact, the road between Tahsil Deoria and Gorakhpur passes through Kasia.

Kapilavastu, the scene of Buddha's childhood and early youth, which is situated in Nepal, can be reached direct from Lumbini, the distance being only 10 miles, through fields and meadows or from Saharatganj, a station on the North-Eastern Railway. From the station to Nepal border, there is a fine metalled road followed by a kuchcha road on Nepal side. It takes one to a small town, called, Tawlihua from where the site at a distance of a mile only.

The other four places of pilgrimage which, with the above four, make up the *atthamahathanani*—eight great (sacred) places—were the scenes of four of the principal miracles that the Tathagata performed. These are Rajgriha, the capital of Magadh, where the Buddha tamed the infuriated elephant Nalagiri, let loose on him by his jealous cousin Devadatta. The second miracle happened at Vaisali, where in a mango grove a number of monkeys offered him a bowl of honey. The third place is Sravasti, the capital of Kosala, identified with Sabeth-Maheth on the borders of Gonda and Bahraich districts, Sabeth denoting the city proper, and Maheth the site of Jetavana monastery, 12 miles from Balarampur station on the North-Eastern Railway. The fourth place, Sankasya,

has been identified with Sanisa Basantpur in Etah district approachable from Farukhabad station on the Northern Railway.

(I) Besides Bodh Gaya, Rajgriha and Vaisali, the following places in Bihar are hallowed with his memory and memorials :—

- (i) Nalanda ;
- (ii) Satgharwa (seven chambers) at Barabar and Nagarjuna in Gaya District ;
- (iii) The stupas at Kesaria and the Asokan pillars at Lauria Araraj, Lauria Nandangarh and Rampurwa.

A general view of Rajgir



Sixty-five miles south-east of Patna, in the same district, and connected with it by a macadamised road, lies the hill-girt town of Rajgir. It is also the terminus of the Bakhtiarpur-Bihar-Rajgir Light Railway, Bakhtiarpur being a railway junction, 30 miles east of Patna, on the main Patna-Howrah line. It is famous, in tradition and history, as the first known recorded capital of an empire, even as Nalanda, falling on the same route, with $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile diversion from the Nalanda railway station, is the first known citadel of learning. At Nalanda, accommodation position is difficult. A visitor may stay in an Inspection room, attached to the local museum, which is meant for departmental use, temporarily by writing to the Curator of the local museum sufficiently in advance. There are also Dharamshalas in the adjoining Bargaon village. Besides a comfortable Inspection Bungalow and a commodious Rest House, Rajgir has a Burmese Temple, a Japanese Temple and a number of houses and Dharamshalas where accommodation may be available. Rajgriha is perhaps the one town which is sacred to the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Jains alike. Bodhi Gaya has excellent places for stay, including an electrified Inspection Bungalow, with sanitary fittings. Accommodation can be reserved by writing to the Executive Engineer, P. W. D., Gaya. Construction of a Circuit House is under serious consideration of Government.

As for Vaisali, it is approachable either from Hajipur or from Muzaffarpur. It is at a distance of 23 miles from both the places, and there is a regular bus service from each of the two places. "Tamtam" or taxis may also be hired, the latter only at Muzaffarpur. The road



The Asokan Pillar at Basarh (Vaishali)

from Muzaffarpur is in a better condition. At Vaishali, (in village Basarh), there is a Rest House, constructed by the Vaishali Sangha. It was the capital of the ancient republic of the Lichchavis, one of the eight tribes and the most powerful of them, included in the confederacy of the Virja.

The village Kesaria, a thana headquarters, is situated 22 miles south of Motihari. The road up to Pipra Kothi (8 miles) is excellent, but beyond that it is an unmetalled fair-weather road only. The village of Araraj or Lauria Araraj, 18 miles south-west of Motihari, may be reached by a partly metalled and partly unmetalled road, via Tarkulia and Matearia. The pillar stands a mile south-west of Radhia village. For both these places accommodation has to be secured in Motihari town, which is the district headquarters of Champaran district and which has, besides a Circuit House, Inspection Bungalows etc. The most convenient station from which Lauria Nandanagarh can be visited is Bettiah. The village is 16 miles north-west of it and is connected by a metalled road running to Bagaha. The unique remains of Nandanagarh are about a mile from it. About one mile south of Gannaha Railway Station, on the Narkatiaganj-Bhiknathoree branch of the North Eastern Railway, is the hamlet of Rampurva, on the borders of Nepal.

III. TYPES OF MONUMENTS

In a period of religious vacuum, in B.C. 255, Asoka adopted Buddhism as the State religion of the country. Essentially a graphic creed, it not only filled the void but made substantial contributions towards the art and

architecture of the time, and the following six types of architecture grew up :—

- (a) a series of edicts, inscribed on the rocks ;
- (b) a number of tumuli or *stupas* ;
- (c) monolithic pillars ;
- (b) the *Chaitiyas*, originally a tumulous (*chita*), but subsequently a sanctuary of any kind : the Buddha Temple ;
- (e) *Vihara* or a monastery, including rock-cut chambers ;
- (f) railings, etc.

Asoka perhaps found that his inscriptions were not sufficiently striking to suit his purpose, and wanted a more spectacular and enduring memorial. He, therefore, caused to be raised, in many parts of his empire, *stupas*, sacred mounds, commemorative of the Buddha, their shape, like that of a pyramid. As a *stupa*, from the nature of its structure, was subject to disintegration owing to the effects of the climate, the emperor started "to think in stone", and an impressive monument symbolising the creed was devised in the form of a pillar, a lofty imposing monolithic column, erected on a site, selected for its sacred associations and/or marking the course of pilgrims, way to the holy places. The line of the four pillars in Bihar—at Kollua (Basath or Vaishali), Lauria Araraj, Lauria Nandangarh and Rampurva, lay along the ancient royal route from Patalipura to the sacred land of Buddha on the borders of Nepal. Each pillar, containing the ordinances inscribed on the rocks, consisted of a plain unornamented shaft, circular in shape, from 30 to 40 ft. in height, and rising straight out of the ground without any suggestion of a base, tapering like the trunk of a tall

palm tree. Each had its own distinctive capital, consisting of figures of animals. Together they symbolise the Four Quarters of the Universe, the elephant being the guardian of the east, the horse of the south, the bull, as Rampurva, of the west and the lion, as at Kolhua and Nandangarh, of the north. All the four animals are carved on the abacus at Sarnath, evidently signifying that, although the pillar was to the north in position, it was entitled to commemorate, by the addition of the Great Wheel which these beasts support, the proclamation of the Lord for the Four quarters.

Although the monolithic pillars caught the imagination, it was to the *stupas*, as the symbol of the Buddha, that the pious pilgrims paid their most fervent devotions. As the Buddhist ritual consisted of circumambulating the *stupas*, a processional passage was provided by enclosing the monument within a railing, leaving a space for promenading. As time passed, these structures were elaborated. Two other types of structure also came early in evidence, one being a temple for the performance of the ritual, and the other a monastery for the residence of the priests.

The inscriptions on the Barabar and Nagarjuna Hill cave sanctuaries, near Gaya, show that they were prepared for the use of certain Ajivika ascetics, a sect which was not Buddhistic but was related to the Jain religion. These are chambers of special interest. On the one hand, they are the earliest examples in India of the rock-cut method, on the other, some of them are exact copies in the rock of existing structures in wood and thatch. The two most notable, the Lomas Rishi and Sudama, have been cut adjacent to one another in the

Barabar Hill and their interior is very similar while the former is exceptional, as it is the only one which has an ornamental facade.

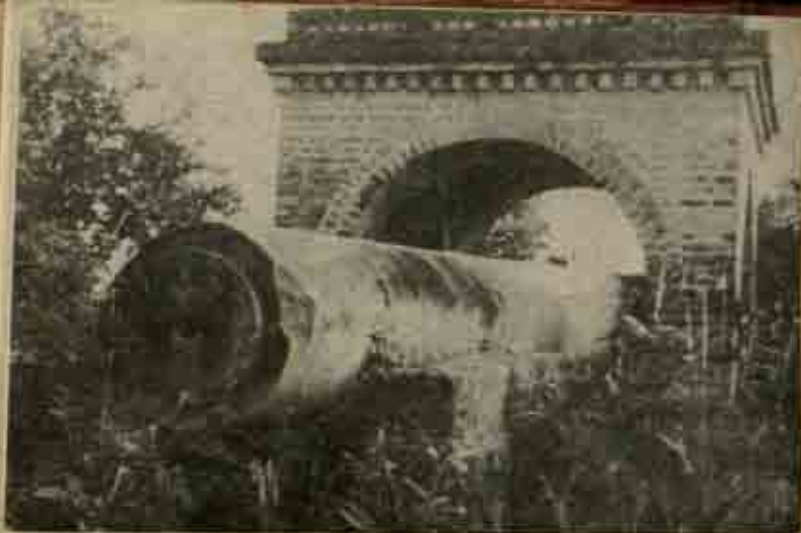
Buddhist monuments in Bihar as well may be classified under the following six groups :—

- (1) Rock Edicts ;
- (2) Pillars or Stambhas (Pali Thambhas ; Hindi Lat) ;
- (3) Stupas (Pali stupa, Anglo tope) ;
- (4) Viharas or Sangharamas ;
- (5) Chaitya or Temple (Pali, Chatiya) ;
- (6) Ornamental railings and other monuments.

Among the other monuments are dedicated caves or those connected with the life of Lord Buddha ; images, *toranas*, ponds, hills and mountains.

The approach to the Barabar hill caves of Asoka.





The Asokan Pillar at Rampurwa

Details of location of the aforesaid six types of monuments are as follows :—

1. **ROCK-EDICTS**—Asoka's rock-edicts are found only at two places in East India, viz., Dhauli near Bhubaneswar, in Orissa, and Sasaram, in Shahabad district. The former contains all the 14 edicts of the Emperor, while the latter only edict number one. It is engraved on a rock in a cave on the hill of Chandan Pir to the east of Sasaram town.

2. **STAMBHAS (pillars)**—Monolithic pillars, both commemorative and containing the message of

Priyadarshi Ashok, were erected by the Great Emperor, at a number of places in India, and of these four are found in this State. These are highly polished, tall and well-proportioned, with slightly tapering monolithic shafts and are crowned by majestic animal capitals. All the pillars in Bihar lay on the royal route to Nepal and were erected at important public places. They are found at Kolhua (near Basarh or Vaisali), Lauria Araraj (Radhia), Lauria Nandangarh (Mathia) and Rampurwa. While the former is in Hajipur subdivision of Muzaffarpur district, the latter three are in Champaran district. The Kolhua and Lauriya Nandangarh pillars and one of the two Rampurwa columns are crowned by a single lion seated on its haunches; the second Rampurwa column by a standing bull, and the damaged Lauriya-Araraj column seems once to have been crowned by a Garuda capital.

Of these the capitals at Kolhua and Lauriya Nandangarh are in good condition; those of Rampurwa (both bull and lion crowned), have been recovered in more or less damaged condition.

All these pillars are chiselled out of grey Chunar sandstone and have a lustrous polish due to the application, perhaps of silicious varnish, on the stone which has stood the ravages of times down the centuries. This material suggests that there was at or near Chunar (in Mirzapur district, U.P.) an art centre, established and patronised directly by the Maurya Court, an assumption further supported by the fact that all the component parts of the columns, including the crowning animal abacus and shaft, tend towards gradual specialisation. The stylistic evidence, afforded by the columns and capitals,

shows that while the Bakhra pillar is an ill-proportioned clumsy shaft, it has a plain abacus and an uncouth figure of a lion on the top, evidently indicating the crude beginning of the artistic effort which culminated in the fine elegant column at Lauriya Nandangarh and the wonderful capital of Sarnath.

The three of the five columns found in Bihar, viz., the Lauriya Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh and Rampurwa (with lion capital) pillars bear the six pillar edicts of Asoka. The Rampurwa column (with lion capital) was raised in the 26th year of the reign of Asoka while the Lauriya Nandangarh column in the 27th year for they bear the respective dates. The Kolhua pillar, locally known as Bhimsen's Lath, is 22 ft. above the ground level. The Araraj pillar was erected in 249 B.C. It is 37 ft. high while the Nandangarh pillar is 33 ft. in height, above the ground. The circular abacus supporting the statue (of a lion) is ornamented with a row of geese, picking their food. The column, which has a light and elegant appearance, is easily the best preserved of the five pillars, found in Bihar. Its massiveness, glaze and exquisite finish cannot fail to impress even a casual visitor.

The Lion (at Nandangarh) has been injured in the mouth, while the pillar itself bears the marks of a cannon ball (which can be seen in the picture) just below the capital. This damage is ascribed to some follower of Aurangzeb, whose full name, Mohiuddin Muhammad Aurangzeb Padshah Alamgir Ghazi, with date (sun 1071) corresponding to 1660-61 A.D. is inscribed in the pillar itself in beautiful Persian characters. It must have been inscribed by some zealous followers in Mir Jumla's army which was then here on its return from Bengal.



The Asokan Pillar at Lauriya in Champaran, near Arrah

after the death of Emperor's brother, Shurja. About one mile south of Gannaha railway station, at the hamlet of Rampurwa are two mutilated Asokan pillars, one bearing a copy of the 6-Pillar Edicts, surmounted by a lion, the other surmounted by a bull which is a masterpiece of Mauryan sculpture. The capital of the standing pillar has a circular abacus, ornamented with a row of geese, picking their food as in case of Nandangarh pillar. The figure of the lion surmounting it has disappeared ; only the feet and the part of the legs are there. The edicts are word for word the same as those on the pillars at Araraj and Nandangarh. Its base, a shattered *stupa*, 6 ft. high, still stands in situ.

Close to it stands the capital, which was disconnected from the shaft by one Mr. Garriek, in 1881, in order to take the photograph of it. These two masses of stone used to be connected by a bolt of pure copper. It is suggested that the pillar was destroyed and laid on the ground by some zealous followers of Mir Jumla who also damaged the Nandangarh Pillar.

The edicts deal with different subjects as under :—

Edicts I—The principle of Dharma.

Edicts II—The Royal examples.

Edicts III—Self examination.

Edicts IV—The powers and duties of the Commissioners.

Edicts V—Regulations restricting slaughter and mutilation of animals.

Edicts VI—The necessity for a definite creed.

As regards the importance of the places where these pillars have been found, Bakhra pillar is in the immediate neighbourhood of Vaishali which was once the capital of

the famous Licchavis, and which Buddha visited several times. The Lauria Araraj (or Radhia) pillar is situated only at a distance of one mile to the south-west of the famous Hindu temple of Araraj-Mahadeva. It is twenty miles to the north-west of the Kesaria *stupa*, on the way to Bettiah. Proceeding north-west towards Nepal, one comes across the graceful Lauriya-Nandangarh or Mathiah pillar in a wonderful state of preservation. It stands near the opulent Lauriya village, 3 miles north of Mathiah and very close to the ancient site of Nandangarh, the remarkable ruins of which date, according to Dr. Bloch, from pre-Mauryan period, and where has been located the sacred site of the "Charcoal Stupa" of Pippalayana. Some twenty miles north-east of it and more than a mile north-east of Piparia village is the Ramapurva hamlet which has, as we have seen, two Asokan pillars.

3. STUPAS

(i) Kesariya Stupa.

To the north-west of Vaisali, at about 200 li. or 33 miles, Hsien Tsang places the ruins of an ancient town, which had been deserted for many ages. This ancient monument is known to the people as *Raja Ben ka deara*. There, Buddha was said to have announced that he reigned in a previous existence, as a Chakravarti Raja, or supreme ruler, named Mahadeo. The place possesses a mound of ruins with a lofty *stupa*, 52 ft. high, on the top. This monument stands at a crossing of two great thoroughfares of the district, namely, from Patna northwards to Bettiah, and from Chapra, across the Gandak, to Nepal. Buddha himself, according to the Ceylonese Chronicles, informed Ananda that for a Chakravarti



Terracotta panelling in the main Stupa

Raja they built the *stupa* at a spot where four principal roads met. If nothing else, it points to the antiquity of the place, which is now a thana headquarters for Champaran district.

The monument was, in fact, only a memorial *stupa*, erected to perpetuate the fame of one of Buddha's previous births, and not a sculptured *stupa* for the reception of relics. There is a small mound in the vicinity of the *stupa* which has been partially excavated. The excavations have disclosed the walls of a small temple, 10 feet square inside, and the head and shoulder of a colossal

figure of Buddha with the usual thick curly hair. The mound, which is about 200 feet square, is locally known as Ranivas, and also Gorai, and the buildings are attributed to some ancient Rani. It appears to be the site of a *Vihara* or temple monastery, as portions of cells are still traceable on the eastern side. At the south-west angle there is another smaller mound of brick ruin, 120 feet from north to south and 60 feet from west to east. It is probably the ruin of a temple.

(ii) Nandangarh Stupa.

About three quarters of a mile west of Lauriya Nandangarh pillar and half a mile south-west of village Lauriya is a huge detached mound, called Nandangarh. It is about 80 feet high and is composed of bricks. There are traces of the foundation of at least one small building on the top of the mound.

According to Buddhist tradition, after the cremation of Buddha's body, at Kusinagar, the fragments that remained were divided into eight portions. The Mauryas of Pippalivana sent an embassy, claiming a share of their relics, which, however, arrived only after a division had been made and had to be content with the ashes of the funeral pyre. According to V.A. Smith, this mound is "the Ashes stupa" in which the ashes of Buddha's funeral pyre were enshrined. According to Dr. Bloch, it was perhaps some fortification of the Bulayias, one of the eight tribes of Vrijis, who were united in a powerful confederacy. The capital of the Bulayias was Allapappa which was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Gandak, which is about 10 miles distant from Nandangarh. It



The ruins of the monasteries at Nalanda

may be noted here that traces of an old moat round the mound are still visible.

Even more curious are the earthen mounds, north of the village, on the western side of the Turkaha stream. There are 15 mounds, arranged in three rows, of which one row runs from east to west and the other two rows from north to south. It is believed that Buddha was apparently alluding to these earthen *stupas* when he questioned Amanda about the Vriji people. "As Thou here O Amanda", he asked, "the Vrijis maintain respect, reverence and make offerings of the Chetyias".

Scholars believe that their dates range from 600 to 1000 B.C. About 50 years ago, an iron coffin, containing

a human skeleton, was discovered here. Excavations were carried out by Dr. Bloch and he found small deposits of human bones. We have in the Lauriya mounds an intermediate form of ancient Indian burial custom, between the Vedic *smashan* and the Buddhist *stupa*. The ancient *smashan* is always situated to the north of a town or a village and the mounds lie north of Nandangarh, which evidently was the citadel of an ancient city.

(iii) Gandha Hasti Stupa.

About a mile south-east of Bodh-Gaya temple, across the Niranjana (Falgu), is situated village *Bakraur* on the eastern outskirts of which is a *stupa*, the scented elephant *stupa*, near which Hsien Tsang saw a tank and a stone pillar. The ruins of this *stupa* and the lower portion of the shaft of the pillar still exist at Bakraur. The *stupa* and the pillar were erected to mark the spot where Buddha, in a former existence, as a Bodhisatva, was the son of an elephant who was captured by the king and imprisoned there.

(iv) Nalanda Stupa.

The ruins of Nalanda extend over a large area. The structures exposed to view represent only a part of this extensive establishment and consist of monastic sites, *stupa* sites and temple sites. Lengthwise they extend from south to north, the monasteries on the eastern side and the *stupas* and the *Chaitya* on the western.

Stupa site No. 3 is a large structure standing in the middle of a court in the south-western corner and surrounded by a number of votive *stupas*. The original



The main Stupa at Nalanda

stupa must have been a small structure which was successively enlarged and built over, the present building being the result of seven such stratifications. It appears that, unlike the monasteries, the builders did not wait for the ruin of the older structure before renewing it, but enlarged the *stupa* by an altogether new masonry facing, leaving intact the Buddhist figures in stucco on the face of the original solid structure. It also appears that the *stupas* had four towers abutting on the corners. Each successive addition, it is interesting to note, followed the original plan, and to give suitable support to the additional masonry to be erected, a square framework

of encasing walls was built on each side, the casing then being filled in to form a solid core for the enlarged *stupa*.
(v) **Vaisali Stupas.**

Gautama Buddha is said to have visited the city three times during his life time. In one of these visits several monkeys are believed to have offered him a pot of honey. It was here again that Buddha announced his approaching *nirvana*, and after his *nirvana* the Lichchavis are said to have erected a *stupa* over their share of his earthly remains. A little over 100 years after the *nirvana*, here was held the second Buddhist Council. The exact location of the *stupa* is not known. But the following three *stupa* sites are seen at Vaisali besides the site of the citadel of the ancient city of Vaisali, locally known as *Raja Bisat ka Garh*.

Some 20 yards to the north of the Ashoka pillar at Kolhua, locally known as *Bhimsen ka lathi*, there is a round *stupa*, at present only 15 ft. high, with a small shed on the top containing an image of Buddha.

At some distance from the pillar is another mound, apparently ruin of a massive *stupa*, some six or seven feet above the surrounding fields, and measuring nearly one thousand feet from north to south, and about six hundred feet from east to west. It is entirely under cultivation now.

There is another ruined brick *stupa* with some Muhammadan tombs on its top. It is a solid mass of brick work standing 24 feet above the fields, the most important tomb being Miranji-ka-dargah.

(vi) **Some Votive Stupas at Bodh Gaya.**

A large number of votive *stupas* are seen in the courtyard of Bodh-Gaya temple, particularly to its north,

containing sacred relics of Buddhist saints, brought from different corners of the country and abroad.

4. VIHARAS

The most important form of Buddhist monuments in Bihar is the *Viharas* or *Sangharamas* (monasteries) from which the province derives its name Bihar.

Remains of early structural *Viharas* belonging to centuries both preceding and succeeding the Christian era have been found at several places. *Rock-cut examples* of monasteries have been found in abundance in India, and of these, the Barabar and Nagarjuni groups of caves of Gaya district are the earliest. The Barabar group belongs to the time of the Great Asoka and the Nagarjuni to his grandson, Dasaratha. The caves of the two groups were simple rectangular chambers, cut out of rock with a barrel-vaulted roof above, and characterised by a lustrous polish on the interior walls resembling that on the Asokan pillars. They are the earliest examples of the rock-cut method and are exact translations in stone of existing wood and thatch building style.

The Caves—Sixteen miles north of Gaya town is Bela Railway Station on Patna-Gaya section, connected by a black-topped road. Seven miles east of Bela, approached by a fair-weather road, are several hills of granite stone, Barabar and Nagarjuna being the most important. These hills consist of two narrow parallel ridges, about half a mile distant from each other. In the hollow ground between the ridges are two small lakes, the scene of an annual fair. The caves, which are collectively known as the *Sat-Ghara* (seven houses), are divided into two groups, the four southernmost in the Barabar group being the older.



*A view of the Ratnayhar with miniature Votive Stupas
in the foreground*

The Karna K(ch)anpar cave is situated in the north face of the ridge. It is a plain rectangular hall, 33 feet 6 inches in length, 14 feet in breadth. The height of the walls is 6 feet 1 inch and the vaulted roof is 4 feet 8 inches above them. The entrance faces the north, the cave running east to west lengthwise. At the western end of the cave is a raised platform, 7 feet 6 inches long, 2 feet 6 inches broad and 1 foot 3 inches high. Both the walls and the roofs are highly polished throughout. Outside, to the right of the door, is the dedicatory

inscription. In five lines of deeply cut characters, it records the bestowal of the cave by Ashoka in the nineteenth year of his reign (275-232 B.C.). The inscription runs thus :

सारा प्रियदर्सी एकुन दीरुति वसाभिहिते जलबोसागमयात् मे
इयं कुमा सुपिये खलतिकववतसिदिना

King Priyadarsin dedicated this cave "supiya" on the Kalatika Hill. (as a gift to the Ajivakas,) when he had been consecrated nineteen years, as a shelter during the rainy season.

The other two important caves of the Barabar group, namely, Sudama and Loamas Risi caves, will be dealt with in connection with the *Chaitya* monuments.

The fourth cave of the Barabar group is the *Vistā Jhapri*. It consists of two chambers and is unfinished. On the right hand wall of the outer chamber is an inscription recording the bestowal of the cave by Ashoka in his twelfth year. The outer portion is a verandah, rather than a chamber : there are socket holes in the floor to take some kind of timber framework. The inscription with translation is given below :

सज्जिनाप्रियदसिनादुवादसवसाभिहितेना इयं कुमा खलतिक पवतसि
दिना सार्जीव केहि

This cave on the Khalatika Hill was dedicated as a gift to the Ajivikas by king Priyadarśin when he had been consecrated twelve years.

From these inscriptions, it appears, that the ancient name of the Barabar Hill was Khalatika Hill. The Kalatikapārvata is also mentioned in the Patanjali Mahābhāṣya under 1.2.53. and it lay on the royal road from Kalinga to Rajgriha and Pataliputra.

The most important of the Nagarjuni group is the *Gopika cave* (the milk-maid's cave). It is 40 feet 5 inches long and 19 feet 2 inches broad, both the ends being semi-circular. The walls are 6 feet 6 inches and the vaulted roof has a rise of 4 feet. Immediately over the doorway, the jamb of which slope inward, is a small panel containing an inscription of four lines recording the dedication of the cave to the Ajivikas by Dasaratha on his succession to the throne. The remaining caves, known as the *Vahiyaka* and the *Vadathika*, are small and of no special interest. They both bear inscriptions of Dasaratha. Below are the three inscriptions with their translations :—

वहियका कुभा दपलयेन देवानपियेना अन्नंतलियं अभिपितेना
(आजीविकेही) भदतेहिवापनिपिदिशाये निपिठे आचंदमपूलियं ।

The *Vahiyaka* cave was dedicated (as a gift) to the venerable Ajivaka ascetics, for residential purposes during the rainy season, as long as the moon and sun endures, by king Dasaratha, who was consecrated as king after Devanampriya (the beloved of the gods).

गोपिका कुभा दपलयेना देवानपियेना आनचालियं अभिपितेना
आजीविके (हि भद) तेहि वापनि (पि) दिशाये निपिठा आचंदमपूलियं ।

The *Gopika* cave was dedicated (as a gift) to the venerable Ajivaka ascetics for residential purposes during the rainy season as long as the moon and the sun endure, by king Dasarath, who was consecrated as king after Devanampriya (beloved of the gods).

वहियका कुभा दपलयेन देवानपियेना अन्नंतलियं अभिपितेना
(आजीवि) केहि भदतेहि वा (पनि) पिदिशाये निपिठा आचंदमपूलियं ।

The Vedathika cave was dedicated (as a gift) to the venerable Ajivaka ascetics to serve as a dwelling place during the rainy season, as long as the moon and the sun endure, by king Dasarath, who was consecrated as king after Devanampriya (the beloved of the gods).

Some of the monasteries have been mentioned by Hinen Tsiang who visited India in the early part of the seventh century. Most of them have been indentified successfully by General Cunningham and the scholars succeeding him.

Bhiknapahari Monastery.

Hieun Tsang says, "To the south-west of the old palace there is a small rocky hill, with many dozens of caves, which was made for Asoka by the demons for the use of Upagupta and other *arhats*".

To the south-west of the present Patna City and about 2 miles south-east of Bankipur, there is a small rock hill, at the base of which is a small hamlet. The rocky summit of the hill, however, is uninhabited; and is now known as Bhiknapahari.

In Muhammadan history, Panch-Pahari is mentioned as standing just outside the City fortifications, from the top of which Akbar inspected the fort during the war with Daud Khan. The fort referred to there is Sher Shah's fort (the present Quilla house of the Jalans in Patna City). The Panch-Pahari appears to be Bhiknapahari. It may be mentioned here that at the foot of this *pahari*, Hieun Tsang saw five *stupas* on the south-western side.

The name of the hill Bhiknapahari, meaning the hill of the Bhikkhus (or monks), is so clear a record of its ancient purpose, that further comment appears needless.

Kukkutarama Vihar at Patna.

Hieun Tsang says further—to the south-east of the city was Asoka's Kukkutaram (cock) monastery with a *stupa*.

To the south-east of Patna, there is yet a small brick mound in village Pahari which is identified with this *stupa*.

Arogyaram Vihara at Patna.

At the excavations of Kumarahar in Patna a seal has been found inscribed as "Arogyarama Vihara", which denotes a monastery most probably situated in that locality.

Odantapura Vihar.

Tibetan records of Lama Taranatha state that the monasteries of Odantapura (Biharsharif) and Vikramshila (Patharghatta or Bateshwarsthan near Colgong) were burnt down. Tradition states that, before the Muhammadan invasion, Bihar (Biharsharif) used to be called Bihar Dandi or Dand Bihar, an obvious contraction of Dandpur Bihar. If we consider that *vihara* means merely a monastery, it will be clear that the proper name of the town was Dandpura. An inscription mentions Udantapur Desa, which shows that the name Udantapura or otantpura or Dandapura was not only the name of a city but of a region.

Ancient site of the Odantapuri Vihar may be located at the place where now the Nalanda College stands. The Buddhist remains which General Cunningham could find here were votive stupas and fragments of figures. One of the last was inscribed with characters of about A.D 900 but the inscription is unfortunately only a fragment.

The kings of the Pala dynasty (8th-12th centuries) of Bengal founded and patronised a university here with the help of Nalanda scholars.

Kapotaram Vihar (Pigeon Monastery).

It has been identified with the large *vihara* of Avalokiteswara, surrounded by a multitude of sculptured buildings on the Bari Pahari hill of Biharsharif town.

The hill (Bari Pahari) stands to the north-west of the town with a precipitously steep cliff on its northern face, "as though the waves of some prehistoric ocean had once thundered against it" and an easy slope of successive ledges of rock on the southern face. The summit is now crowned by the mausoleum of a Muhammadan Saint—Malik Ibrahim Baya—but amongst the relics some fragments of Buddhist statues and votive *stupas* can still be discovered.

Tittira-rama Vihara (Partridge Monastery).

To the south-east of the Pigeon Monastery, the pilgrim (Huen Tsang) travelled for 40 li, or nearly 7 miles, to another monastery, which stood on an isolated hill. The bearing and distance point to the great ruined mound of Titarawa, which is exactly 7 miles to the south-east of Bihar. Titar means a partridge. At Titarawa there is a fine large tank, 1200 feet in length, with a considerable mound of brick ruins to the north, which, from its square form, has all the appearance of being the remains of a monastery.

Nalanda Vihar.

Seven miles west of Tittira-rama Vihar and the same distance south of the Kapotarama Vihar stood Nalanda Vihar with its group of monasteries which housed 10,000



*Buddha in "Dhyana Mudra", on the walls of main Stupa
at Nalanda*

students and 1,000 teachers, learned in the various lores and imparting instruction to students trekking their way to this most famous seat of learning from all corners of the Buddhist world. Nalanda was visited several times by Buddha and the history of the monastic establishment is traced back to Asoka. But the excavations have not yet revealed any proof of its being pre-Guptas. The monastery flourished from the 5th to the end of the 12th century A.D. The celebrated Chinese pilgrim, Huen Tsang, stayed here for several years, both as a guest and a teacher. He has left behind a detailed and graphic account of the different establishments. I-tsing, another Chinese traveller, has also left us a picture of the life led by the Nalanda monks. The monastic establishment was maintained by 200 villages bestowed by different kings. The names of some of its Acharyas—Shilbhadra, Shantarakshita, Atissa Dipankar—even today conjure up a vision of the supreme eminence of the Mahavihar.

Tapodarama Vihar.

There is a lake below the Vaibhara mountain, outside Rajagriha town. The lake was cool, but the stream flowing from it was hot. Around it was the Tapodarama, where Buddha seems to have stayed on several occasions.

Veluvana Vihar.

It was the pleasure garden of Bimbisara. When the Buddha first visited Rajagriha, after his Enlightenment, he stayed at Latthivanuyyana. The day after his arrival, he accepted the king's invitation to a meal at the palace, at the end of which the king, seeking a place for the Buddha to live—"not too far from the town, not too near, suitable for coming and going, easily accessible to all people, by day not too crowded, by night not exposed

to noise and clamour, clean of the smell of people, hidden from men and well fitted to seclusion"—decided on Veluvana and bestowed it on the Buddha and the fraternity. This was the first *arama* accepted by the Buddha and a rule was passed allowing monks to accept such an *arama*. The Buddha readily agreed to stay there, and it was during this stay that Sariputta and Moggallana joined the order.

The Buddha spent the second, third and fourth *vassa* (*varsha-vash*—rains) at Veluvana. Kalandekanivapa is a place nearly always mentioned as the spot where the Buddha stayed in Veluvana. There many *Vinaya* rules

A general view of the entrance to Rajgir Valley



were formulated. It was a very peaceful place, and monks, who had taken part in the first Convocation, held in the Saptaparni cave, rested there, in Kalandakanivapa, after their exertions.

Veluvana was so called because it was surrounded by bamboos. According to Hinen Tsang, it was fenced by a wall, eighteen cubits high, holding a gateway and towers, and the Kalandakanivapa (Karandavenuvana as he calls it) lay one li to the north of Rajgriha.

Paribhajakarama Vihar (Rajgir).

It is near Veluvana, which Buddha sometimes visited with some of his disciples in the course of his alms rounds.

Rahula Vihar (Rohila).

Traces of a *vihara* on the top of an isolated barren hill in village Rahula, 3 to 4 miles south of the Jethian Hills (Yashtivana) and Tapovana, are seen in brick and terracotta fragments. The monastery, according to popular belief, was named after Buddha's son, Rahul, whom he had ordained as a monk on his first visit to Kapilavastu.

On the way from Rahula to Bodh-Gaya lay the Kukkutapadagiri Vihar, either at Kurkihar (226 bronze and copper images—93 inscribed—were discovered here in 1930), 3 miles north of Wazirganj P.S., according to General Cunningham, or on the Samnath hills to the south of Wazirganj, and also a monastery in village Kenar. It is in fact said that the entire distance from Odandapuri (Biharsharif) to Bodh Gaya was covered with monasteries, at least one at every seven miles.

Barabar hill is the site of the ancient Shilbhadra monastery, the remains of which can be seen at the base of the hill. In the ruins is a magnificent statue of Buddha.



A side view of the Mahabodhi Temple and the outer panelling

The Mahabodhi Vihar (and *Chaitya*).

It is by the name of Mahabodhi Vihara that the Chinese pilgrim, Hsuen Tsang, sought to make known the far-famed Buddhist shrine at Bodhi-Gaya. The Mahabodhi temple is a unique living memorial in the history of the world and perhaps the oldest and the most venerable of its kind. Its architectural effect is superb and many a temple, in India and neighbouring countries, like Burma and Nepal, has been modelled on its pattern. Its basement is 48 ft. square, and as it rises, in the form of a slender pyramid, which springs from a square platform, it becomes narrower and narrower, till it reaches its neck, which is cylindrical in shape. Four towers on its four corners rise gracefully to some height, giving the holy structure a pose and balance and a relief to the eyes of the beholder. The outside walls have niches for the reception of statues. Rows of Peepul trees round the temple, which seem to have sprung up, shoot and branch, from the comparatively modern offsprings of the famous Bodhi Tree, hallowed in Buddhist lore, provide an artistic frame of foliage to the picture, which the 170 ft. high temple presents from a little distance.

This sacred edifice is like a banner unfurled by Time to proclaim to the world the mighty efforts of Sidhartha to solve a universal problem, the problem of transcending sorrow and of preserving peace.

Image of Buddha.

Inside the temple, at the western wall of the sanctum, on an altar, there is a colossal image of Buddha in a sitting posture. The image, which has been gilded over, is set up facing the east in exactly the same position in



Image of Buddha in Bodh-Gaya Temple

which Lord Buddha sat in meditation for enlightenment with his back to the Bodhi Tree.

History of the Temple.

The entire courtyard of the temple is studded with votive *stupas* or *stupas* enshrining relics of saints of all sizes and description, built during the past 2,000 years or more. Most of these *stupas* are extremely elegant in their structural beauty and are built mostly of sandstone or black-stone. There is an impressive *toran*—granite gate,—to the east of the temple, which has some fine carvings of deer, lions and other figurines. It is said to date back from the 4th or 5th century A.D.

The history of the temple is of absorbing interest. Ever since Priyadarshi Asoka, who was to Buddhism what Constantine was to Christianity, built a Sangharama (monastery) and a temple here, the place has been the centre of pilgrimage for the Buddhists of the whole world. Kings of foreign countries, like Burma and Ceylon, constructed at this place many shrines and monasteries, from time to time, thus imparting to it an international character. According to General Cunningham, the present temple was built on the site of that erected by Asoka and was set up during the rule of the Indo-Scythian kings in the 2nd century A.D., though other authorities attribute it to the 5th century A.D. From the account of the travels of Huen Tsang, who saw it in 637 A.D., it appears that the imposing temple, which we see today, was constructed on the same site on which Asoka had built a *vihara*, about the 2nd century A.D., by a Brahmin convert to Buddhism, practising penance at Kailasha and receiving a divine communication from Lord Shiva

to erect a large Vihara by the side of the Bodhi Tree which still exists to the south of the temple.

When Fahien visited Bodh-Gaya, in 409 A.D., he found three monasteries in all of which there were monks residing. Huen Tsang gives the height of the Vihara as "about 160 or 170 feet". The aforesaid description of the temple tallies so closely with the present temple that there can be no doubt that it is, inspite of repairs and alterations, the same building, which was seen and described by Huen Tsang.

The three monasteries or Saugharamas, which, according to Fahien, stood to the north of the temple, appear to have been built in about 330 A.D., by Meghavarna, a Buddhist king of Ceylon, after obtaining permission from the then reigning king, Samudra Gupta.

The stream of Chinese pilgrims, which flowed steadily during the reign of Harshavardhana of Kannauj, maintained its flow under the Pala kings in the 9th and 10th centuries. In the 11th century, two missions were sent over to Bodh-Gaya by the Burmese king, the first in 1035 A.D., and then again in 1079-86 A.D. Between 1100 and 1200 A.D., repairs were carried out by Dhammarakkhita, a *bhikkhu*, the cost of which was met by Asokamalla, Raja of Sapadalaksha (Siwalik hills). Works of restoration by the Burmese were carried out in 1105 and 1298 A.D.

The King of Burma visited the place in 1811 A.D., and the King of Ava had some years before sent two messengers. The modern history of the temple may, however, be taken to have commenced from the end of 1874 A.D., with a letter from the King of Burma to the Government of India, Anxious to

restore the temple and to construct a monastery for the Buddhist monks, King Minddon Min of Burma deputed a party of some Burmese officials and workmen to Bodh-Gaya, with the permission of the Government of India, in 1876 A.D., and the repair work was taken up. It was, however, discovered that the repair work was being done without due regard to archaeological consideration. Government took the work of restoration into its own hand and completed it in 1884 A.D., at a cost of two lakhs of rupees. In the course of restoration, the Mahabodhi Tree fell down and two saplings of it were planted at two places—one at its original place, just to the west of the temple, and the other at a distance of some 80 ft., to the north of the temple, to which place were also removed the Hindu images and kept on a platform. The Hindus offer their *pinda* (oblation cake) at the latter place, which, according to *Sabdakalpadruma*, is one of the 45 Vedis of ancestor-worship, in *Dharmaranya* (Bodh-Gaya).

5. CHATIYA OR TEMPLES

I. Sudama Cave Chaitya at Barabar Hill—It is opposite the Karna Chaupar Cave, 32 ft. 9 inches long, 19 ft. 6 inches broad. This cave, with a circular hall and hemispherical dome, was excavated under the orders of Asoka for the benefit of the Ajivikas.

II. Lomas Risi Cave Chaitya at Barabar Hill—This Chaitya cave is almost like the Sudama Cave, but has been left unfinished. The entrance is, however, well made and polished.

III. Nalanda Temples—To the north of *Stupa* No. 3,



The Lomasa Rishi Cave

and around the same alignment, there have been exposed temple structures, each with a later temple, erected over the remains of an earlier one. The later structures show rectangular projections at the four corners of the square cells which, no doubt, were intended for miniature shrines. In the surrounding court, there are traces of structures in the shape of miniature shrines and votive stupas, etc. Such remains are found on all sides and further explorations are necessary to expose the numerous buildings and establishments that arose at this famous place.

IV. Animesha Chaitya at Bodh-Gaya—Amongst the sites of meditation, near the Bodh-Gaya Temple, is



A view of Animesh Lochan in the Temple Courtyard

the Animesha Chaitya, the spot where Lord Buddha stood gazing on the Bodhi Tree for a week for giving him shelter, while he attained *Samma Sambodhi*. Built in bricks, some of which are carved, it is square at the base and tapering towards the top, the height being 55 ft. It has a small image of Buddha inside the shrine.

V. Chankramana Chaitya (Jewelled Cloister) at Bodhi Gaya—A raised platform along the northern wall of the main temple, marks the place where Lord Buddha spent seven days walking up and down in meditation. The platform is 3 ft. high and 60 ft. long. The stumps of pillars, still existing, indicate that the walk was flanked with stone pillars which probably supported a roof over it. Stone-carvings of lotus are still seen at the spot which Lord Buddha trod.

VI. Ratnagruha Chaitya at Bodhi-Gaya—It is a small roofless shrine amidst votive *stupas* in the northern compound, where Lord Buddha spent seven days in meditation and reciting to himself. While in contemplation, it is said that blue, yellow, red, white and orange rays emanated from his body.

The Buddhist flags in India and Ceylon are designed with these colours.

Ajapalanigrodh tree, under which Sujata offered milk-rice to Buddha, and Muchalinda lake, where Muchalinda, the snake-king of the lake, held its hood over him, as a protection against a furious storm and rain, have not yet been determined, but the last must be in village Mucharin, which is situated about a mile south of the temple.



The Sunga railings on the southern side of the Mahabodhi Temple

6. RAILINGS AND OTHER MONUMENTS

(i) **Stone-railing at Bodh-Gaya**—The present quadrangular stone-railing, as it still stands around the Bo-tree and the Bodha-Gaya temple, consists of two different parts, which may at once be distinguished from each other, not only by difference in the style of carving but also by the different material used. The older set, Cunningham's so-called "Asoka railing", is made of sand-stone from the Kaimur range of hills, near Sasaram. The later set, probably of the Gupta time (300-600 A.D.),

is made of coarse granite. The carvings on each set also bear a striking difference; the older set has a number of carvings representing the usual scenes from other ancient Buddhist railings, e.g., the purchase of the Jetavana by Anathapindika (at Shravasti), *Lakshmi* being bathed by the *Diggajas*, *Surya* standing on a chariot drawn by four horses etc. On the later, or the Gupta period railings, we meet with ornamental figures only, such as *Garudas*, *Kirtimukhas*, *Stupas* etc., bearing in every detail the well-known characteristics of Gupta art such as we find at Sarnath and other ancient sites in India.

Another point of distinction between the two sets lies in the fact that while inscriptions are found incised on the sandstone pillars, rails and coping stones, the later granite structure remains wholly uninscribed.

(ii) **Indra Sila Guha at Giriak**—Giriak is a thana headquarters of Patna district, situated 11 miles south of Biharsharif town on the Patna-Ranchi Road, two miles to the south-west of the village and a mile from Jarasandh's tower, on the summit of the Rajgir range of hills, which suddenly terminate here, there is a natural cavern in the southern face of the mountain, about 250 feet above the bed of the Panchane. This cave, called *Gidha-dwar*, is generally believed to be connected with Jarasandh's tower (locally known as 'Mama-Bhagina'), but an examination with torches proved it to be a natural fissure. The mouth of the cavern is 10 feet broad and 17 feet high, but its height diminishes rapidly towards the end.

The remains at Giriak appear to correspond exactly with the accounts given by Fahien of the "Hill of the



A distant view of Vaibhargiri at Rajgir

Isolated Rock", where Indra questioned Buddha on forty-two points and which accounts for the name of the Cave—Indra Sila Guha. No etymology has yet been proposed for the name of Giriak, but it seems likely that it is nothing more than 'Giri-eka', one hill, as distinguished from a range of hills at Rajgir, which is only 7 miles to its west.

(iii) **Bodhidruma or Bo-tree of Lord Buddha at Bodhi-Gaya**—No tree in history is so famous, so fortunate and so highly adored and venerated as the *Asvattha* (अश्वत्थ) or *Pipal* tree, at Bodhi-Gaya. It is the sacred tree at the

root of which, sitting cross-legged, ascetic Siddhartha vanquished the forces of *Mara* and attained *Samma-Sambodhi* (Buddhahood).

This tree appears to have had an eventful history. It is obvious that it could not have preserved its line except through grafts and seeds. It is difficult to say precisely how many times it died and was revived.

In his unregenerate days, Emperor Asoka himself cut down the tree and later, when he began to revere it, his wife, Tishyarakshita, in a fit of jealousy, had it cut down. The king was struck with remorse and the tree was planted again. There were magnificent ceremonies, when a branch of the tree was taken to Ceylon by King Asoka's son, Mahendra, and daughter, Sanghamitra, and it was planted in the sacred city of Anuradhapura. A bas-relief on the eastern gateway at Sanchi portrays the scene eloquently.

About 600 A.D. Sasanka, a Hindu king of Bengal, had the tree cut down, for a third time, dug up and burnt. It was, however, replanted (sapling from the same roots) by Purnavarman, King of Magadha. When Huen Tsang visited the place (637 A.D.), he found a young tree. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton judged that the tree could not be more than 100 years old at the time of his visit (1811 A.D.). In 1870 A.D. the old tree was uprooted by a storm, but another sapling was planted at the very spot. A decade later it fell down, while the restoration work of the temple was in progress, and was replanted at two spots, as indicated earlier.

(iv) **Vajrasana**—Vajrasana or the Diamond Throne is the seat at the foot of the Bodhi Tree, where Buddha sat down in order to attain Supreme Enlightenment.



The Vajrasana and a portion of the trunk of the Bodhi tree

It rests on an ornamented brick-platform of the time of the later Indo-Scythian or earlier Gupta kings. It is a piece of highly carved stone seat, 7 ft. 6 inches long, 4 ft. 10 inches broad and 3 ft. high. The Vajrasana derives its name from the fact that it is regarded as having stability, indestructibility and capacity of resisting all worldly shocks !

(v) **Saptaparni Cave or hall at Rajgir**—The cave, where the first Buddhist Council was held, had been identified by Stein with the site of a group of caves, six in number (originally the number might have been seven).

below the largest Jain shrine, known as the temple of Adinatha, in the rocky scarp of Vaibhara hill. A pathway, which descends the rugged scarp of the ridge to a level of about 100 ft. below the temple, leads to a long artificial terrace in front of the caves, which is 120 ft. long, 34 ft. wide at the east and 12 ft. at the west extremity. The wall, marking the outer edge of the terrace, is constructed of large unhewn stones set without any mortar. Only a small section of it, about 15 ft. long and 8 ft. high—now remain in situ. Sir John Marshall contests the identification, and he locates the hall about a mile and a half west of the Pippala House on the north side of the Vaibhara Hill.

A view of the Gridhakuta at Rajgir





A view of the Maniar Math

(vi) **Gridhakuta Hill at Rajgir**—Gridhakuta, or the vulture's peak, is famous in Buddhist history as the residence of Lord Buddha, during his sojourn in Rajgriha. It is one of the highest of the hills surrounding the city. King Bimbisara made a flight of steps to reach the summit where the monastery was situated. There are a number of small caves in the vicinity which were used by monks. Physician Jeevak's herbary was situated at the foot of this hill.

(vii) **Maniyar Math at Rajgir**—General Cunningham, believing the mound to be the site of an old Buddhist

stupa, sank a shaft near the Math in 1861-62 and without destroying the Math came to the depth of 21½ ft. He discovered three small figures at about 14 ft. below the surface, viz., (1) of Maya, lying on a couch in the lower portion and with ascetic Buddha above, (2) a naked standing figure with a seven-hooded serpent (probably Parsvanath), and (3) a crude figure which could not be identified. Dr. Bloch undertook the excavation in 1905-6. He destroyed the Jaina shrine and exposed a brick-structure with well preserved stucco figures around the base. The site received the attention of the Archaeological department in later years also with the result that a number of many interesting antiquities have come to light, particularly spouted terracotta utensils.

(viii) **Jarasandha Ki Baithak at Rajgir**—Pippala Stone House, locally known as *Machan* or watch-tower, and *Jarasandha ka Baithak*, is a stone structure, a little above the hot springs on the eastern slope of the Vaibharagiri. This has been identified with the residence of Pippala, referred to in the Buddhist texts and also in the Chinese accounts. The structure looks like a rectangular platform. According to Buddhist literature, the Pippala Cave was the residence of Mahakasyapa, afterwards President of the First Buddhist Council, held in the Saptaparni Cave.



APPENDIX

(i) *Stupas* (*Pali Stupa*, *Anglo tope*)—They are funeral mounds, built over a casket of relics associated with the person of Buddha or one of his disciples or perhaps merely to mark some spot hallowed by Buddhist tradition. These memorial sepulchres are found in the form of solid dome-like structures enclosed possibly by a railing or boundary wall and surmounted by a representation of an umbrella or series of umbrellas. Around a large main stupa of this kind are often grouped small stupas—votive emblems—contributed by pious devotees as a work of religious merit.

(ii) *Viharas* or *Sangharamas*—These were monasteries for the accommodation of monks living together in communities and mostly, if not always, connected with *Chaityas*. They were designed on much the same lines as a private house, i.e., a square block formed by four rows of cells along the four sides of an inner quadrangle. In the early period, they were usually built of wood on a stylobate of stone or brick. As the monastic organisation developed, they became elaborate brick structures with many adjuncts. Often they consisted of several storeys, and along each side of the inner courtyard there usually ran a long corridor with the roof supported on pillars.

(iii) *Chaityas* or *Temples* (*Pali, Chaitya*)—Like *Stupa*, the word *Chaitya* is applied to a monument or cenotaph, and in a secondary sense to a temple or shrine containing a *Chaitya* or *Dhatugarbha*, there being a passage round the *Chaitya* for circumambulation (*pradakshina*).





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